

REMARKS

The Office Action dated November 16, 2005, has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 15 and 23 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. No new matter has been added. Claims 17 and 25 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1-16, 18, 23-24, and 26 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 1-14 are allowed, and that claims 17 and 25 are objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have incorporated the subject matter of claims 17 and 25 into claims 15 and 23 respectively, accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 15 and 23 (and the claims that depend from them) are now in condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 15-16 and 23-24 were again rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,721,316 of Epps et al. ("Epps"). Applicants respectfully submit that the claims recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited art. For the reasons already of record, it is respectfully submitted that claims 15-16

and 23-24 are patentable. Nevertheless, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot in view of the amendments to claims 15 and 23, which incorporate the subject matter of claims 17 and 25 respectively. Because claims 16 and 24 depend from claims 15 and 23 and contain additional limitations, they are patentable for at least the reasons claims 15 and 23 are patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

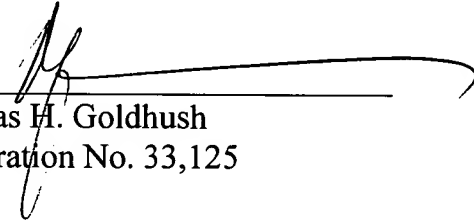
Claims 18 and 26 were again rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Epps, in view of no other references. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims recite subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited art. For the reasons already of record, it is respectfully submitted that claims 18 and 26 are patentable. Nevertheless, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is moot in view of the amendments to claims 15 and 23, which incorporate the subject matter of claims 17 and 25 respectively. Because claims 18 and 26 depend from claims 15 and 23 and contain additional limitations, they are patentable for at least the reasons claims 15 and 23 are patentable. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For the reasons referenced above it is respectfully submitted that each of claims 15-16, 18, 23-24, and 26 recites subject matter that is neither disclosed nor suggested in the cited art. It is therefore respectfully requested that claims 1-16, 18, 23-24, and 26 be allowed and that this application be passed to issue.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,



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